1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

sticks, in the holes that have been made, in order to keep them from closing up. After the healing of the wound, these plugs are, however taken out, and it is only when the boys have reached the age of puberty, that the ear-lobe is gradually distended by means of plugging with a succession of ear blocks, or ear-lobe discs, of increasing sizes. Only youths of mature age, and men, are allowed to take part in certain religious dances. At the performance of these, it is of especial importance to be protected from evil spirits. According to the belief of the Indians, ear discs afford them such protection,[1] and it is therefore possible that this is the reason why the boys begin wearing ear discs only after having attained puberty. For reasons which I shall explain below, I consider that the *piercing of the ear-lobes by no means always implies wearing of ear-lobe discs*. Among the Choroti, the ears of little girls are often pierced in the same way as in the case of the boys[2] (see the woman with pierced ear-lobes in fig. 22), *but never once did I see a Choroti woman wearing discs in her ears*, nor is there in the literature on these Indians any photographic evidence to be found, as far as I know, of Choroti women wearing ear discs. Further; neither Baron Erland Nordenskiöld,[3] nor Doctor Rafael Karsten, both explorers who have lived for a long time among the Choroti, are now able to recollect with any certainty having seen any Choroti woman wearing ear discs.

To cause bleeding by perforating the skin, has among the Chorotis, as among other tribes in the Chaco — a magic significance, and the possession of many scars is considered a great advantage. Thus, for instance, the Chaco Indians will with ostentation and satisfaction show even scars from bites of the palometa fish. When the Choroti believe themselves possessed by some evil spirit, they prick themselves with sharp-pointed bone awls, and imagine that the spirit leaves the body with the outflowing blood. About this custom, Karsten writes: »If the arm fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the belief of the Chorotis, due to the presence of a mohsek in the blood and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The scars left by the cuts are kept up with care and shown with satisfaction,

[1] Karsten (4), p. 134, and Grubb (1), p. 72.

[2] Nordenskiöld observed in a Choroti village that *all* the girls had their ears pierced. According to a letter of his, dated 13 May, 1921. Rockefeller collection of manuscripts, volume 1921, letter N.

[3] According to letter referred to in footnote 2.

Q L should be Chorotis. - Aunty E]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

The custom of tattooing, as it was practised by the ancient Guaycurú is described by Father Dobrizhoffer in much the following way. The Abiponian women, says the Father,[1]) not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married, she is ordered to be marked according to custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman and is pricked. Thorns are used for a pencil, and ashes mixed with blood for paint. The old woman, sticking the points of the thorns deep into the flesh, describes various figures till the whole face streams with blood. The first day she is sent home with her face half pricked with the thorns, and is recalled the next and the next after that, to have the rest of her face, the breast, and the arms pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut up for several days in her father's tent and wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from meat, fish, and some other sorts of food, she feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows upon brambles and conduces much towards cooling the blood.[2])

From Dobrizhoffer's account it appears that tattooing was practised by the ancient Guaycurú in the same way as by the present-day Chaco tribes.

Among the puberty customs we may also, in a certain sense, reckon the perforation of the ear-lobes for the insertion of wooden plugs or tubes. The perforation takes place even before the age of puberty, when the boy or girl is five or six years old, but the wooden ornaments are inserted later and are a sign that the boy or girl in question is regarded as a man or woman. The ear-lobe is pierced with a cactus thorn by an old woman, a grass or small wooden pin being inserted so as to prevent the wound from closing. Later on bigger and bigger pins are inserted, by which the holes are more and more extended, and lastly the plug or tube, which forms one of the most prominent ornaments of the Indians. The wooden plugs which the Tobas formerly wore in their ear-lobes, were so thick and heavy that they hung nearly down to the shoulders. In our own days they are only used by the Argentine Pilága, not by the Bolivian Tobas. It is to be observed that although the ear-lobes of both sexes are perforated, the ear-plugs or tubes are among the Choroti, Mataco, and Ashluslay worn chiefly by men, seldom by women, whereas among the Tobas *only* men wear them. These ornaments seem to have chiefly a magical significance.

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 20 sq.

[2]) This fruit is evidently the tasi fruit mentioned above, which thus is still eaten by the Toba women when they have to observe ceremonial fasting.